

**CAPITOL/DOWNTOWN CENTRAL CORRIDOR TASK FORCE
SEPTEMBER 19, 2006**

MEETING NOTES

Task Force

Members Present: Susan Rani, Pat Lamb, Mike Burns, David Lanegran, Kim Hyers, Paul Mohrbacher, Kristina Smitten, Craig Lien, Deborah Rathman

Guests Present: Ruth Blackman, Marcus Young, Roger Sorbel, Mark Voerding, Art Coulson, Kathryn De Spiegelaere, Joe Spencer, Tim Griffin

Staff Present: Paul Mandell, Allen Lovejoy, Jess Rosenfeld, Lucy Thompson, Shawntera Hardy, Margot Fehrenbacher

Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair Kristina Smitten welcomed task force members, who introduced themselves. Guests were also introduced.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written, with one change. The presentation from Ramsey County staff was moved up to accommodate Ms. De Spiegelaere's schedule.

Review of Meeting Notes from August 15, 2006

The meeting notes were accepted as written.

LOCATE/Union Depot Update

Kathryn De Spiegelaere presented an update on the status of plans to convert Union Depot to a multi-modal center featuring Amtrak, commuter rail, light rail, high-speed rail, inter-city buses (Jefferson and Greyhound) and Metro Transit services. Ms. De Spiegelaere stated that Ramsey County feels very strongly that the LRT line must go all the way to Union Depot; this is #1 on its list of "must-haves." Approximately 45 acres are needed to implement the Depot project, including tracks, a small LRT maintenance facility, a bus layover facility, and storage for trains and buses. The Ramsey County Rail Authority is in the process of acquiring the necessary land, and is working to secure an easement through the Head House for public access to the multi-modal center. Next steps include an environmental assessment of the Depot and adjacent property, preparation of a conceptual engineering study and financial plan, and determination of the appropriate governance structure for the multi-modal center. The total project cost is estimated at \$361 million.

At this point, Chair Smitten asked Allen Lovejoy to review Ramsey County Commissioner Bennett's alternative LRT proposal for a one-way loop on the perimeter of downtown. Mr. Lovejoy reviewed the key components of the proposal and outlined City staff's concerns, including cost, physical constraints (engineering/technical issues), traffic impacts, impact on ridership and the message it sends to the Federal Transit Agency. Ms. De Spiegelaere stated that the Ramsey County Rail Authority will be conducting a study over the next 60-90 days of the proposed loop alternative to determine its Cost Effectiveness Index.

Impressions of the Bus Tour

Task force members shared their impressions and highlights of the tour. Many agreed that it was very useful to see the entire corridor “in person” and get a sense of the changing land use character along the route. The proposed tunnel at the University of Minnesota campus (Minneapolis) triggered some discussion about the trade-offs that might come into play if funding for the entire project is not secured. Allen Lovejoy noted that the portion of the budget allocated to streetscape improvements along University Avenue may be vulnerable because it may be harder to make the case that they are critical to the functioning of the transit line itself. Building a tunnel at the U and terminating the line at Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul are likely to be seen as more integral to the line.

Discussion of Urban Strategies Work To-Date

Chair Smitten reviewed the recent visit by Urban Strategies, Inc. and the preliminary conclusions coming out of the consultants’ work. She stated that the key issues for the task force are: alignment, streetscape improvements, fine-tuning the *Downtown Development Strategy*, determining how to best take advantage of the “market lift” LRT can give to downtown, and opportunities for transit-oriented development. These topics will form the agendas for upcoming task force meetings.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Overview

Shawntera Hardy, PED, presented an overview of TOD, including national trends, characteristics, benefits, challenges and implementation tools. There was some discussion about what tools the City has in place to implement or incentivize TOD. Staff responded that some tools exist currently (e.g. TN Traditional Neighborhood zoning districts that encourage high-density, walkable, compact, mixed-use development adjacent to transit), but that recommendations for updating existing or creating new tools may come out of the Central Corridor Development Strategy work.

Livability 101

Given the late hour, Tim Griffin offered to come to the next meeting and present AIA Saint Paul’s upcoming efforts to work with property owners along the Central Corridor on development opportunities.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m. The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 3, 2006 at 4:30 p.m. It was decided to move the location of upcoming meetings to City Hall Annex to facilitate small group discussions.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy Thompson
Senior Planner
September 25, 2006